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THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE SOUTH

The South has its sectional peculiarities just as other sections have theirs; and these peculiarities must not be ignored. But the South has also its points of similiarity with other sections, and these, I fear, we have sometimes neglected to dwell upon as they deserve. Thus, in examining into the study and teaching of history in American colleges,¹ especially before 1860, I have been much more impressed with the general similarities than with any sectional dissimilarities.

A marked uniformity is observable in the scope of the college curriculum and the distribution of the subjects of instruction among the members of the faculty. It concerns us to learn that the association of ideas, quite as much as material conditions, led, from the first and even well down to the close of the period, to the assignment of classical language, literature, and history to the classical professor, who frequently made a virtue of teaching the history from the original tongue. The president, with little regard to his scholastic antecedents, *ex-officio*, as it were, taught philosophy, intellectual, moral, and political. The latter, the possibilities of which were very dimly perceived, is the slowly developing mass out of which all the modern political sciences have since been differentiated. If the president had more than he could handle, the excess would go to the general utility man, probably to the professor of belles-lettres and rhetoric, who is frequently found with political economy and general history to teach. As the bodies of teachable knowledge grew, additional professors would be provided—if the college could afford it—and history and political economy are found

¹SOURCES:—Study of History in American Colleges and Universities, Herbert B. Adams, U. S. Bureau of Education, Special Circular of Information, No. 2, 1887. The Series of Monographs Higher Education in the various States, edited by Adams, published by the U. S. Bureau of Education. Manuscript letters and reports, some prepared with great care and detail, concerning conditions in many institutions, prepared by officers and alumni of the respective institutions, in the possession of F. W. Moore.

paired with metaphysics, moral philosophy, and belles-lettres in the title of the new chair.

American conditions produced many weak colleges, and the most vigorous expanded slowly. New foundations were made in the old States as population grew dense, and in the area of new settlement as the frontier moved west and southwest. In 1800 there were seven colleges in New England (including two in Vermont), six in the Middle States, five in the South Atlantic States, and four in Tennessee. From 1821 to 1850 four were founded in New England, thirteen in the Middle States, fourteen in the South Atlantic States, eighteen in the Southern States west of the mountains, thirty-seven in the Western States, and three in the Pacific States. Individuals, religious denominations, and States established these schools and appealed, each after its kind, to a limited constituency for patronage and support. I will not say that it was not the best policy, but it would be hard to prove that even the colleges fittest to survive did not pay the price in delayed enlargement of faculty and retarded differentiation and expansion of courses.

Occasionally, within a pretty well-defined period of time, there is evidence of a general tendency among the stronger colleges to expand in a particular direction. The occasion is never hard to find. The earliest instance of the kind which I have noticed seems very plainly to be the academic recognition of that interest in the study of politics which came with the patriotic fervor of independence and the sense of responsibility which independent self-government awakened. From Williams and Yale on the north to William and Mary and North Carolina on the south, professorships of public law were projected and temporarily established, not to train the young lawyer for his profession, but to provide liberal instruction in things political for young Americans of culture.² In these days of small faculties, narrow curricula, and prescribed studies, any man who graduated had about all that any college could afford him. There was little if any inducement to stay longer or go else-

² For the lectures of James Wilson as professor of Public Law at the College of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania), 1790-92, see his "Works," in two volumes.

where, and few could or did go abroad. When the young man had graduated he was ready to teach in whatever position his opportunities, his years, and his bent conspired to provide a berth for him. The vast majority has long since been forgotten. Here and there one achieved distinction. I call attention to the notable individual instances of a professor devoting disproportionate time to one, presumably his favorite, subject, developing it, making a reputation upon it, writing a treatise or textbook, and materially enlarging the body of knowledge upon it. Such men were the specialists of their day. Political economy was a notable specialty, the earliest in the field under discussion.³ Cooper, natural scientist and president of South Carolina College, 1820-63; Vethake, mathematician and for two years (1834-36) president of Washington (and Lee); and St. George Tucker, professor of moral philosophy and political economy in the University of Virginia, 1825-45, are three names among eight or ten, the most familiar of which are Wayland of Brown and Bowen, of Harvard. Cooper's influence in shaping economic opinion was not confined to his class-room, where it was great. He ranks among the foremost public men of his State in the period from 1820 on. American constitutional law is by nature an American subject. In the development of it Dew and H. St. George Tucker may stand over against the more famous Story. In political science, Francis Lieber, prominent and influential as professor of history and political economy in South Carolina College, 1835-57, is the contemporary and peer of Woolsey.

The course of affairs in America illuminates Freeman's famous phrase, History is politics long since past, while the politics of the immediate past and the present is rather the field of constitutional law and political science. American history was frequently specifically limited to the colonial period, or to

³ Cooper's edition of "Say," 1819. Tucker's "Principles of Rent, Wages and Profits," 1837; his "Theory of Money and Banks investigated" in 1839. Vethake's "Principles of Political Economy" in 1838. Dew's "Lectures on the Restrictive System in Economics," in 1829. McVickar's "Outlines of Political Economy," in 1825. Newman's "Elements of Political Economy," in 1835. Raymond's "Political Economy," 1820. Wayland's "Political Economy," in 1837.

the end of Washington's administration. But St. George Tucker, already named in connection with political economy, with his two-volume "Life of Jefferson," his "History of the United States to 1841," and "The Progress of the United States in Fifty Years, 1790-1840," may fitly take his place as the contemporary of Sparks with his "Life of Washington," and his edition of "Smyth's Lectures on Modern History to the Close of the American Revolution, 1476-1790."

Of these men and others like them it could be said that they were superior to the lack of textbooks, for they could create them. But the rank and file of teachers could not. They are crowded for time and overburdened with many subjects. For methods of instruction they depended by necessity or custom on the lecture and the literal recitation. They suffered for the lack of suitable manuals for the use of their students. Yet such manuals as existed were used regardless of sectional or national origin. Priestley in history and Vattel in law ante-date the year 1800. Adam and Tytler in history were used soon after the opening of the century. Cooper's "Say," McVickar's "McCulloch," and the other American textbooks on political economy, owing more or less to Smith or other foreign masters, became available from 1819 to 1840. Eschenburg's history was translated in the third decade and Weber's in the fourth. The textbooks in constitutional law were brought out in the thirties and early forties.⁴

Indications of foreign influence abound. Sometimes an American professor studied abroad. More frequently foreigners were appointed to American professorships. Lieber, him-

⁴ Tucker's four-volume "History of the United States from their Colonization . . . 1441," was issued in 1860. Francis Bowen, tutor in Greek at Harvard, 1835 ff., brought out an edition of "American Documents of the Constitution of 1789." Adams, "Study of History" pp. 24-5. N. W. Fiske, professor of Greek language, literature, and belles-lettres, 1825-33, translated Eschenburg's "History" from the German. A little later Bowen translated Weber's. Adams, "Study of History" pp. 24-5, 73-4. Dew's "Digest of the Laws, Customs, Manners, and Institutions of the Ancient and Modern Nations," (D. Appleton & Co., New York), 662 pp. royal octavo. The "Digest" was privately printed for class use while the author was professor of metaphysics and political economy at William and Mary, 1827-36. Adams, "William and Mary," p. 50.

self a foreigner, cherished the memory of a personal friendship with Niebuhr in Italy. Gessner Harrison, professor of ancient languages at the University of Virginia, 1828-59, and teacher of ancient history, drew inspiration for his work from Niebuhr even in the early part of his career and welcomed Arnold's "Rome" and Grote's "Greece," and the manuals that later came out.⁵ W. H. McGuffey, he of the "Eclectic Reader," successor of St. George Tucker, professor of moral philosophy and political economy at the University of Virginia, 1845-73, gave a course in political economy in 1850-51 with four foreign treatise and one American: the authors were Montesquieu, DeTocqueville, Guizot, Say, Mill, and Grimke.⁶ What better could a college student in the fifties expect in that line?

As the volume of teachable knowledge grew the necessity for additional professors increased and they were provided from time to time according to the financial strength and the enterprise of the institution. The very fact of additional instructors would of itself bring some differentiation of subjects. But nowhere, not even at Harvard and Brown, is there a complete separation of the political and historical disciplines from language, literature, and philosophy. Nowhere is there any suggestion that a professor by absorption in one subject and special training for it would be disqualified to give a suitable college course in one of the others. But as elsewhere, so in some Southern institutions, notably William and Mary College, and the University of Virginia, there were several men at one time

⁵ Remarks of Dr. W. H. Broadus, quoted in "University of Virginia," Adams, p. 164.

⁶ At the end of the second volume of my father's copy of Mill's "Political Economy" (Boston Edition of 1848), is the following note:

"University of Virginia.

"Political Economy — W. H. McGuffey, Professor.

"List of textbooks used session of 1850-51:

"1. Say's 'Political Economy.'

"2. Guizot's 'History of Civilization.'

"3. Grimke's 'Free Institutions.'

"4. Mill's 'Political Economy.'

"5. DeTocqueville's 'Democracy in America.'"

My father has often spoken to me of the value of that course under Dr. McGuffey.—Letter of Dr. J. H. Latane, Washington and Lee University.

who, whatever their academic titles, gave the best part of their time and thought to studying and teaching history and political science. In 1847 a public subscription of over \$20,000 was raised to endow a chair of history and belles-lettres at the College of Charleston. In the early fifties a professorship of governmental science and law was established for both the college and law students by the University of Mississippi.⁷ Virginia established a chair of English and history in 1857. If at the University of Alabama, Tytler's history was recited line by line,⁸ that was the method against which Andrew D. White protested as a student at Yale about the same time. On the other hand Lieber used the lecture with liberal library references and quizzes on both notes and readings.⁹ It must be borne in mind further that it was in 1857 that Andrew D. White began as professor of history and English literature at the University of Michigan,¹⁰ that C. K. Adams was one of his first pupils, and that W. F. Allen did not settle down at the University of Wisconsin¹¹ until after the war. Yet these are pioneers in the new historical movement.

The influence of war in stimulating a patriotic interest in history, national and general, is well recognized. But the very same national successes which in the North stimulated historical interests served in the South to dampen the patriotic ardor of the people. Devastation, poverty and humiliation was their lot. In what could they boast?

When the revival of interest began in the South, the veteran of the Civil War was one of the sources from which it proceeded, not the only source, but one which was both important and characteristic. He was growing old and his fellows were rapidly passing away. As the self-respecting parent of children and grandchildren who held him in filial regard it peculiarly behooved him to see to it that his name went down to history un-

⁷ Riley MS.

⁸ Conversations with Dr. W. J. Vaughn, Vanderbilt University.

⁹ Conversations with Dr. W. J. Vaughn, Vanderbilt University. "Higher Education in South Carolina," Meriwether, pp. 173-8.

¹⁰ McLaughlin-Russell MS.

¹¹ Butler, and Turner-Hackett MSS.

tarnished by partisan accusation and unclouded by misrepresentation. Though defeated in war he was determined not to suffer the common lot of the defeated who do not write their own history. It would be strange if he himself were not sometimes partisan and if time were not necessary to mollify the acerbities of the conflict of words as well as of arms.

But there is now a goodly number of young men in professorial positions in Southern institutions who have had the advantage of training in the best historical seminaries of this country and Germany. Most of them are Southerners by birth, and they are busily engaged in studying Southern historical problems as other students study Southern or other problems, for history's sake and that of our common country. Thus, it seems to me, has the study and teaching of history in the South resumed its parallel and equal course again.

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